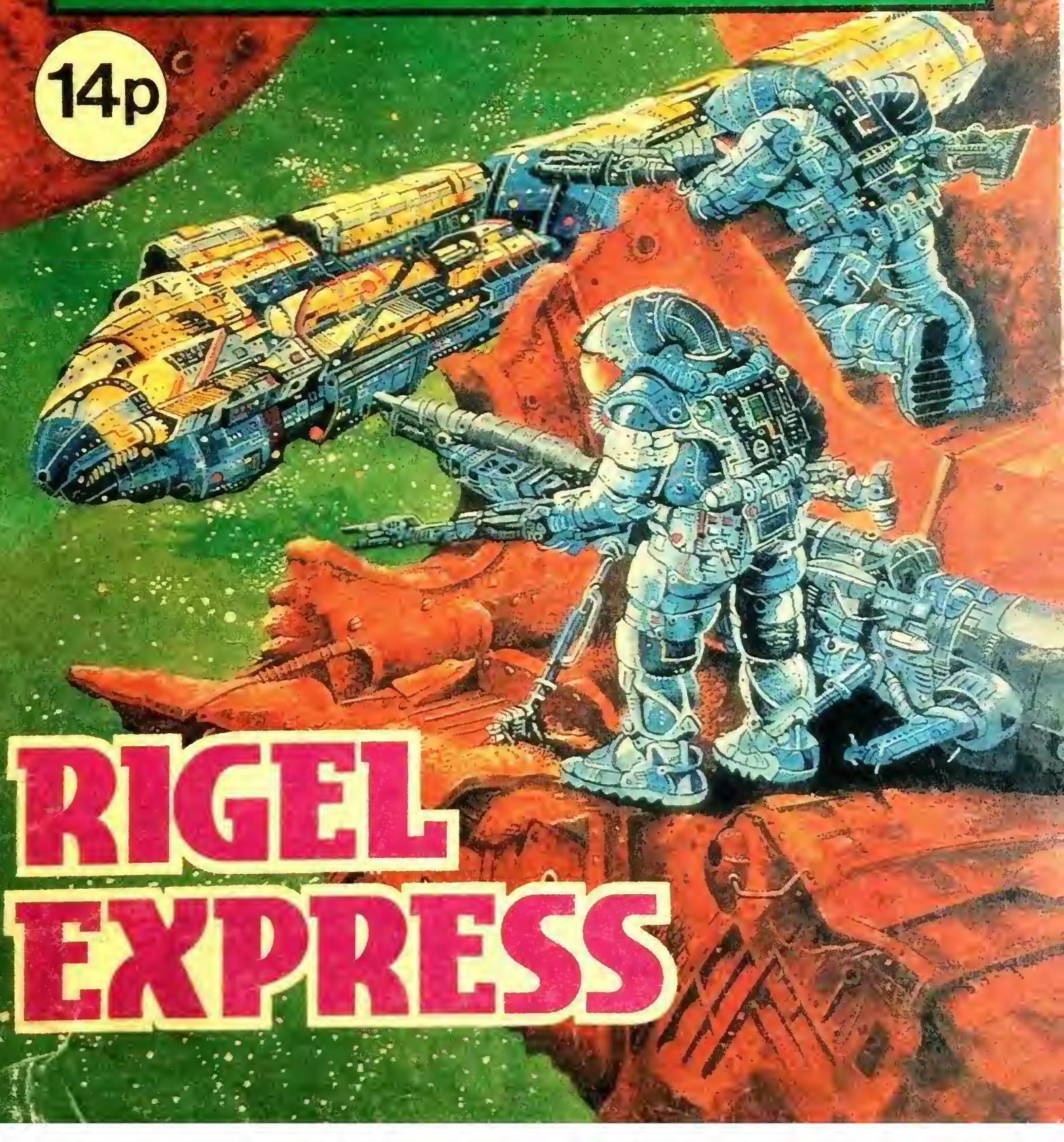


STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 49

14p



RIGEL EXPRESS

STAR RIGEL

LIEUTENANT STEVEN TERRY OF THE 1ST REGIMENT, SPACE TASK FORCE, RISKED HIS SHIP TO SAVE THE SURVIVORS OF A SPACE DISASTER. THE OPERATION WAS A SUCCESS, BUT A COURT OF INQUIRY HELD THAT THE RISK TO HIS SHIP HAD NOT BEEN JUSTIFIED. HE WAS TAKEN OFF ACTIVE SERVICE. IN HIS OFFICE HALF-WAY UP THE 100-STOREY EARTH SPACE COMMAND, STEVE WOULD HAVE GIVEN ANYTHING TO GET BACK INTO SPACE. COMMAND KNEW THIS. STEVE'S NAME WAS ON A SECRET LIST OF POTENTIAL LEADERS FOR SUICIDE MISSIONS AGAINST THE BRUTAL AND BARBARIC ASUR MEGATROOPS, WHO WERE HELL-BENT ON ELIMINATING EARTH'S INFLUENCE FROM THE GALAXY. THE ASUR HAD TO BE CONFRONTED AT THE STAR RIGEL, AND THE ONLY WAY TO GET THERE WAS BY THE RIGEL EXPRESS.

RIGEL EXPRESS

IN EARTH COMMAND CENTRE THE SITUATION WAS BEING DISCUSSED.



THE ASUR HAVE ADVANCED
RAPIDLY. A DELAYING ACTION
WOULD GIVE OUR RE-ARMAMENT
PROGRAMME A CHANCE.

THE OUTER SPACE OBSERVATORY, MILLS 3,
IS RIGHT IN THE PATH OF THE ALIEN
ADVANCE. WE COULD HOLD THEM UP
THERE, BUT IT WOULD BE A SUICIDE
MISSION.



LIEUTENANT STEVEN TERRY WAS IN HIS PODCAR HEADING HOME IN THE RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC.





STEVE LANDED ON THE ROOF OF THE COMMAND CENTRE.



STEVE WAS TOLD THE WHOLE STORY.



YOUR SPACECREW WILL BE A NAVIGATOR,
VIDOP AND GUNNER—PLUS A COMPANY
OF 100 SPACE MARINES. YOU'LL TRAVEL
BY STELLAR TRAIN. YOU WILL FIGHT TO
THE LAST MAN—WE NEED ALL THE TIME WE
CAN GET.

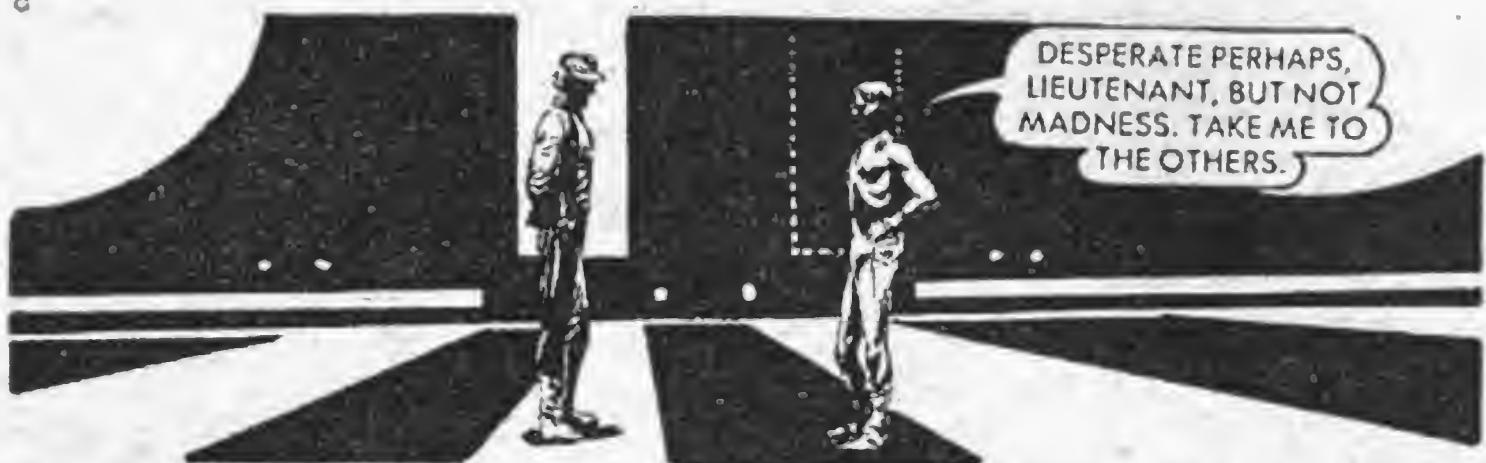


ALL THE CREW AND MARINES COME FROM
MILITARY PRISONS. THEY ARE HARD
CASES ... DIFFICULT TO CONTROL.

THEY HAVE NOTHING TO
LOSE BUT THEIR LIVES ...
THEY'LL LISTEN TO ANYONE
WHO IS TRYING TO KEEP
THEM ALIVE.

STEVE WAS TRANSPORTED TO EARTH CENTRAL
THE GIGANTIC MILITARY AND COMMERCIAL
SPACEPORT.

HENRY, SIR—NAVIGATOR. THEY'VE COMMANDEERED.
THE RIGEL EXPRESS FOR THIS MADNESS.



THE RIGEL EXPRESS IS JUST A
TRANSPORT.. HARDLY ANY
WEAPONS OR ARMOUR.

GEE HAS A DEVICE THAT SHOULD
HELP.



A DESTABILISER. IT EMITS A BEAM OF
UNSTABLE PARTICLES. WHEN IT HITS A
SOLID OBJECT, IT SETS OFF A VIBRATING
REACTION—THE DISINTEGRATION CAUSES
AN EXPANDING CIRCULAR HOLE.



THE RIGEL EXPRESS DRIFTED SLOWLY CLEAR OF THE STATION, BEFORE ENGAGING SPACEWARP.



THE EXPRESS ACCELERATED TOWARD THE DISTANT STAR, RIGEL.



AS THE CRAFT SHOOK ITS WAY ALONG THE STARLANE—

YOU'RE MY SECOND IN COMMAND, HENRY, SO I HAVE TO RELY ON YOU, YET YOU HAVE A SHOCKING RECORD FOR INSUBORDINATION.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME—EVERY TIME I GOT INTO TROUBLE, IT WAS WITH AN OFFICER WHO TALKED ABOUT ACCEPTABLE CASUALTIES, WHO DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THE INFANTRY IN THE SUB ZERO DESERTS OF PLUTO, OR THE BOILING GASES OF SATURN. YOU BENT RULES TO RESCUE PEOPLE . . . I'LL OBEY YOUR ORDERS.

EVEN AS STEVE AND HENRY TALKED, ASUR MEGATROOPERS WATCHED FROM COVER

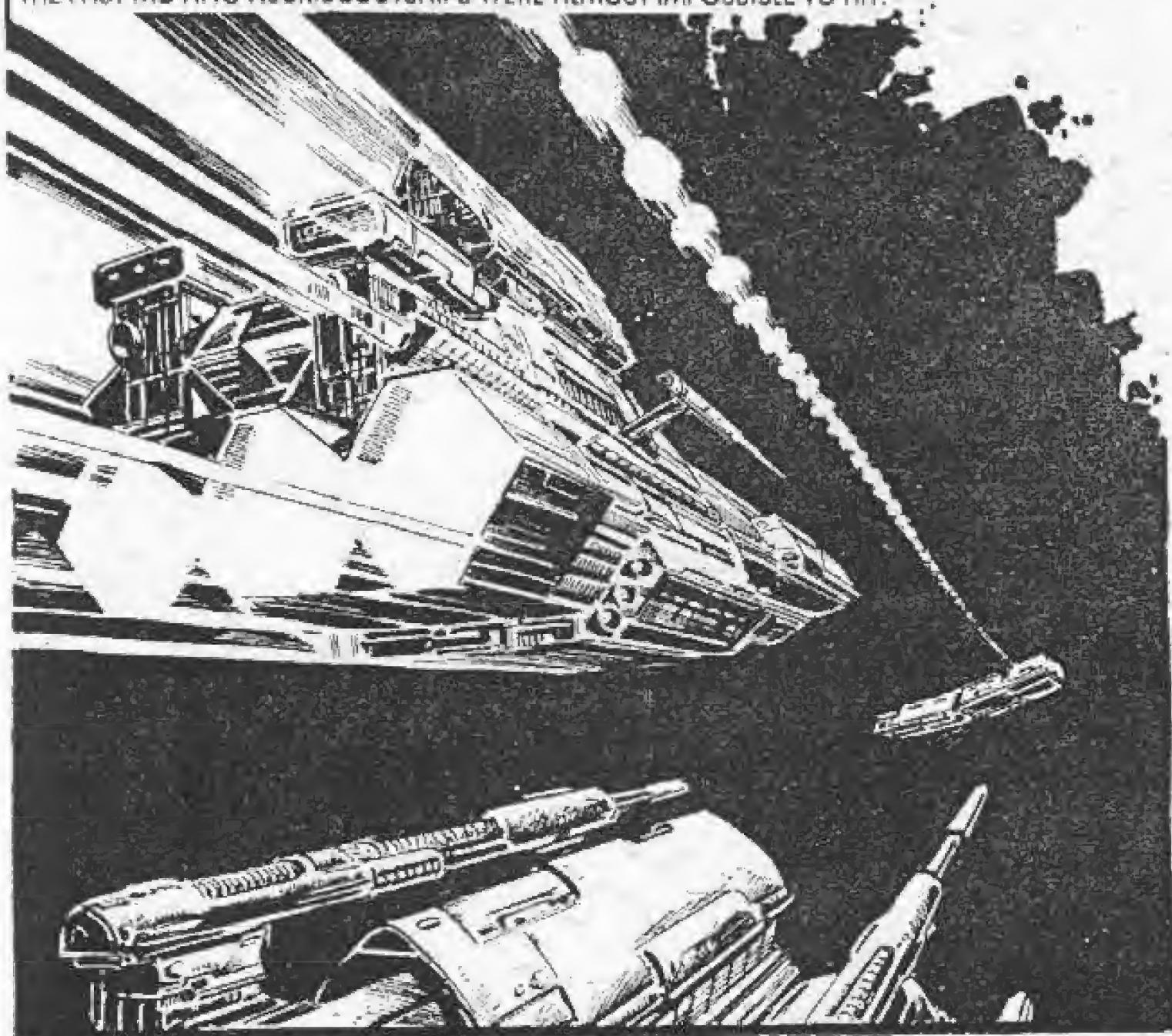


A TERRAN STELLAR TRAIN! THEY
MUST BE MAD TO EXPOSE
PASSENGERS IN OUR PATH!

SENSORS INDICATE
IT'S ARMED—AND CARRYING TROOPS.



THE FAST-MOVING ASUR SCOUTSHIPS WERE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO HIT.



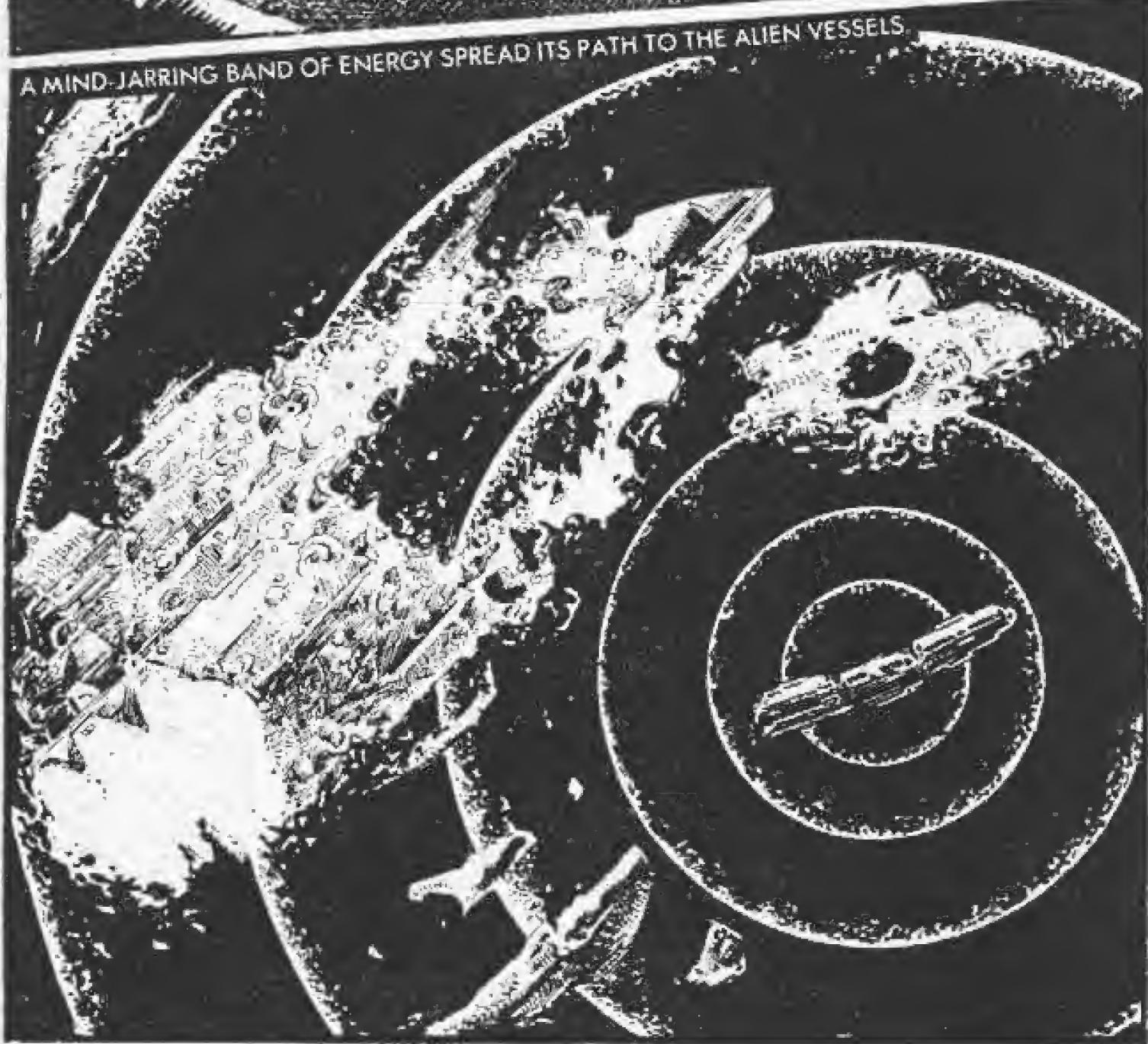




STEVE'S FAKE SMOKE DREW THE ALIENS WITHIN FIRING RANGE.



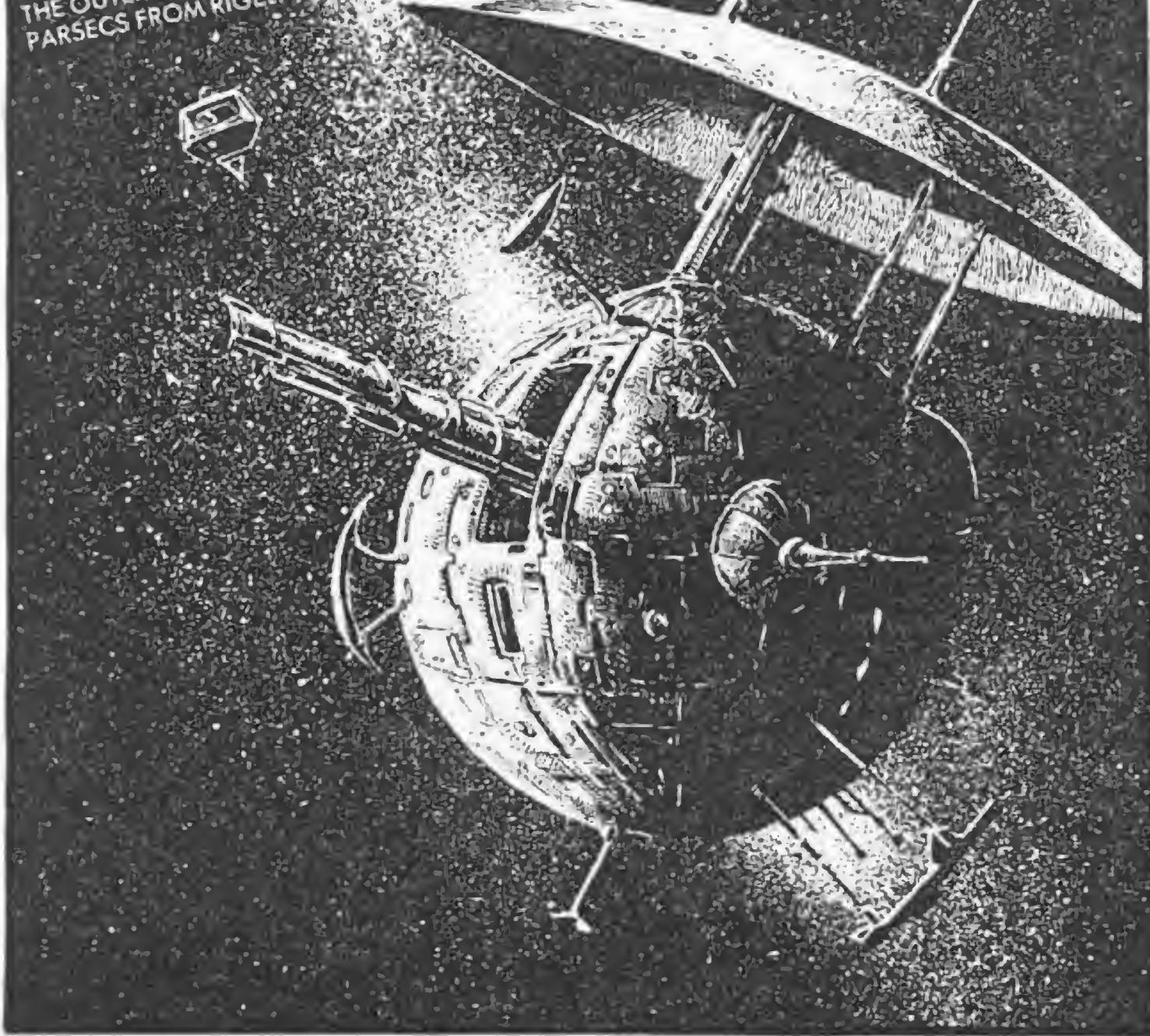
A MIND-JARRING BAND OF ENERGY SPREAD ITS PATH TO THE ALIEN VESSELS.

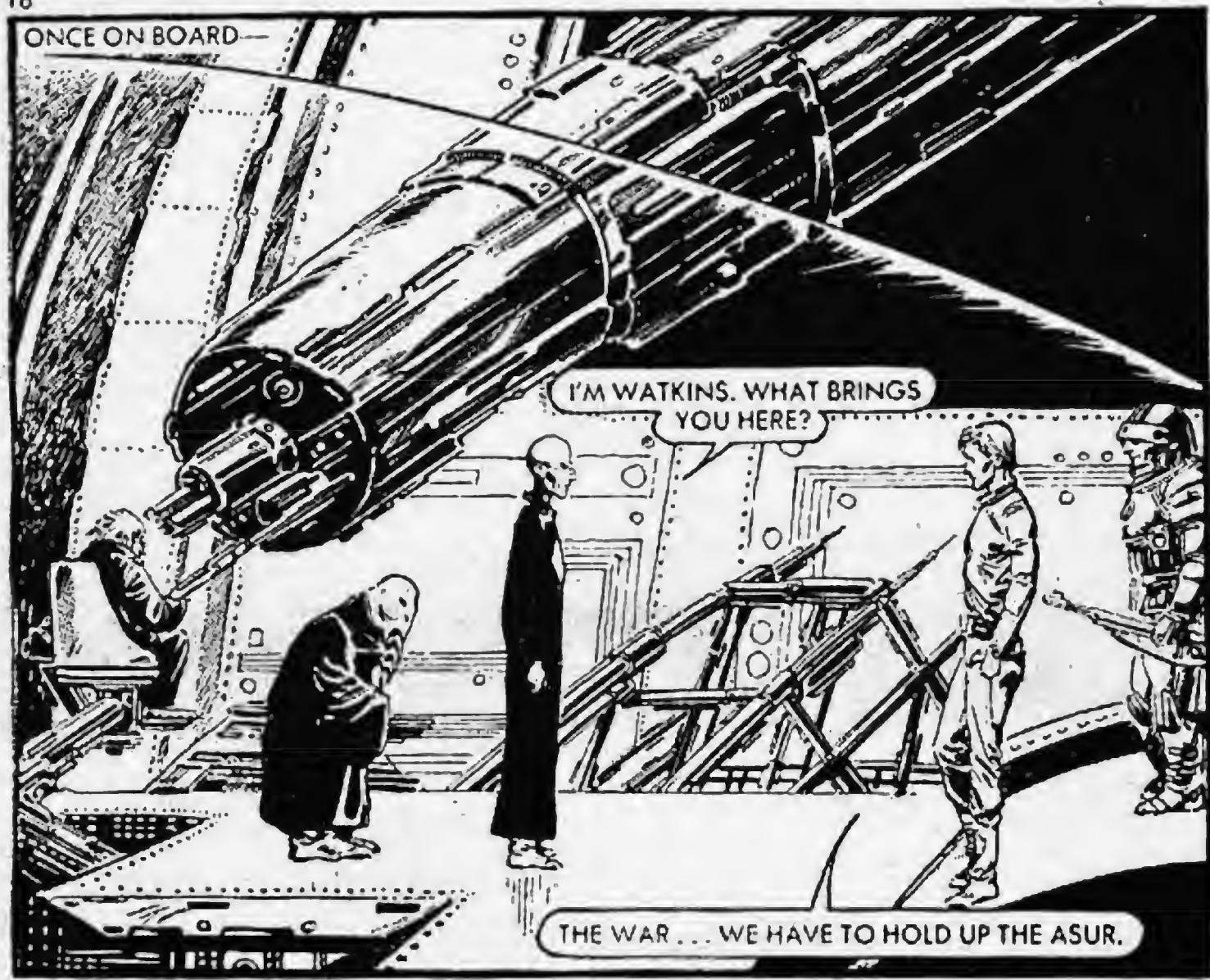


ALIENS 100 PER CENT DESTROYED.
CASUALTY REPORT, SIR . . . 80 DEAD!

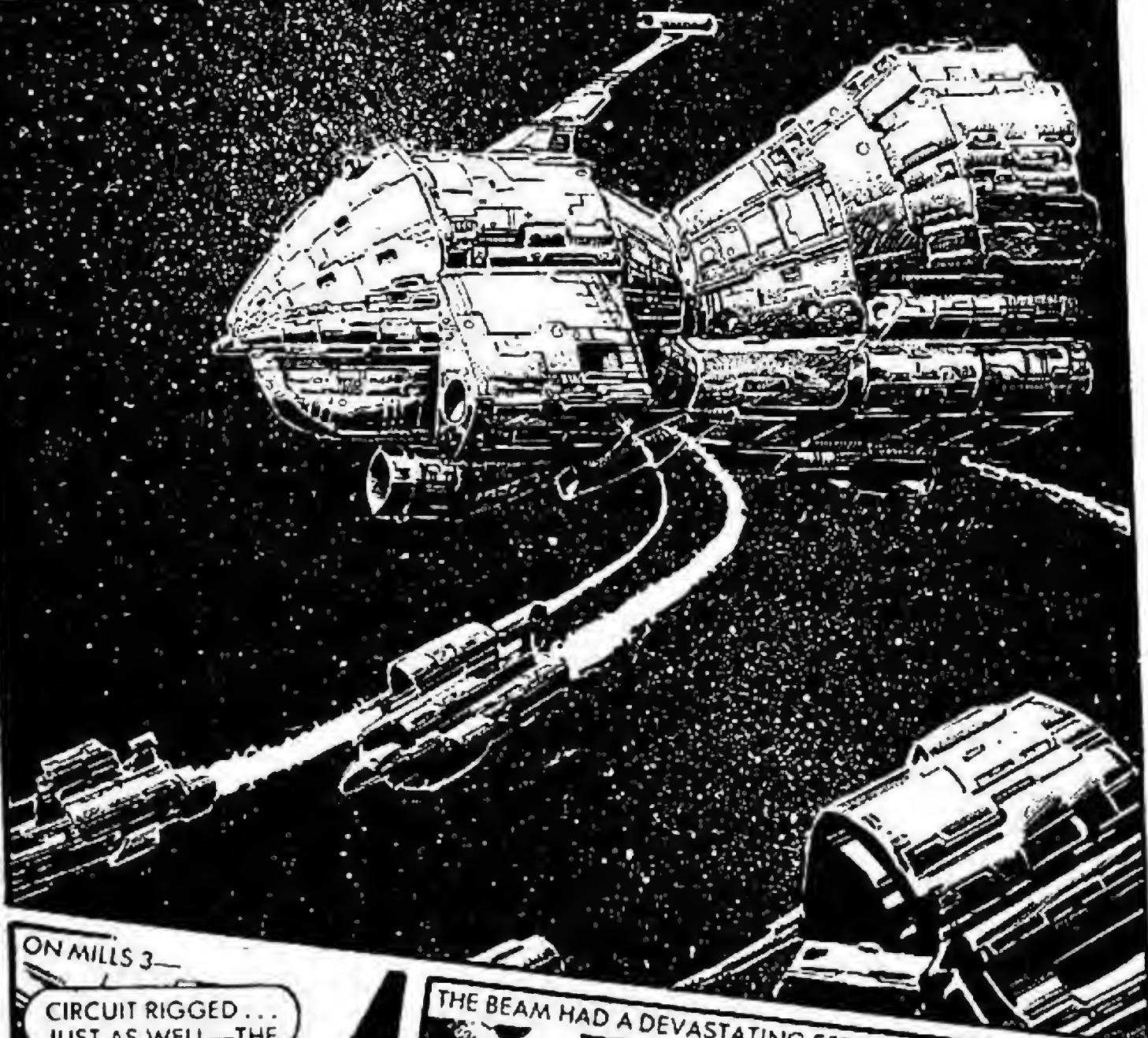
ON TO THE OUTER SPACE
OBSERVATORY. IT'S NOT FAR
BEYOND THE ASTEROIDS.

THE RIGEL EXPRESS REACHED THE CHOSEN BATTLE SITE—
THE OUTER SPACE OBSERVATORY, MILLS 3, ONLY A FEW
PARSECS FROM RIGEL.





AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR SPACECRAFT, THE ASUR MAIN SPACEFLEET MOVED TOWARDS THE OBSERVATORY.



ON MILLS 3—

CIRCUIT RIGGED...
JUST AS WELL—THE
ASUR HAVE SENT
VISITORS.

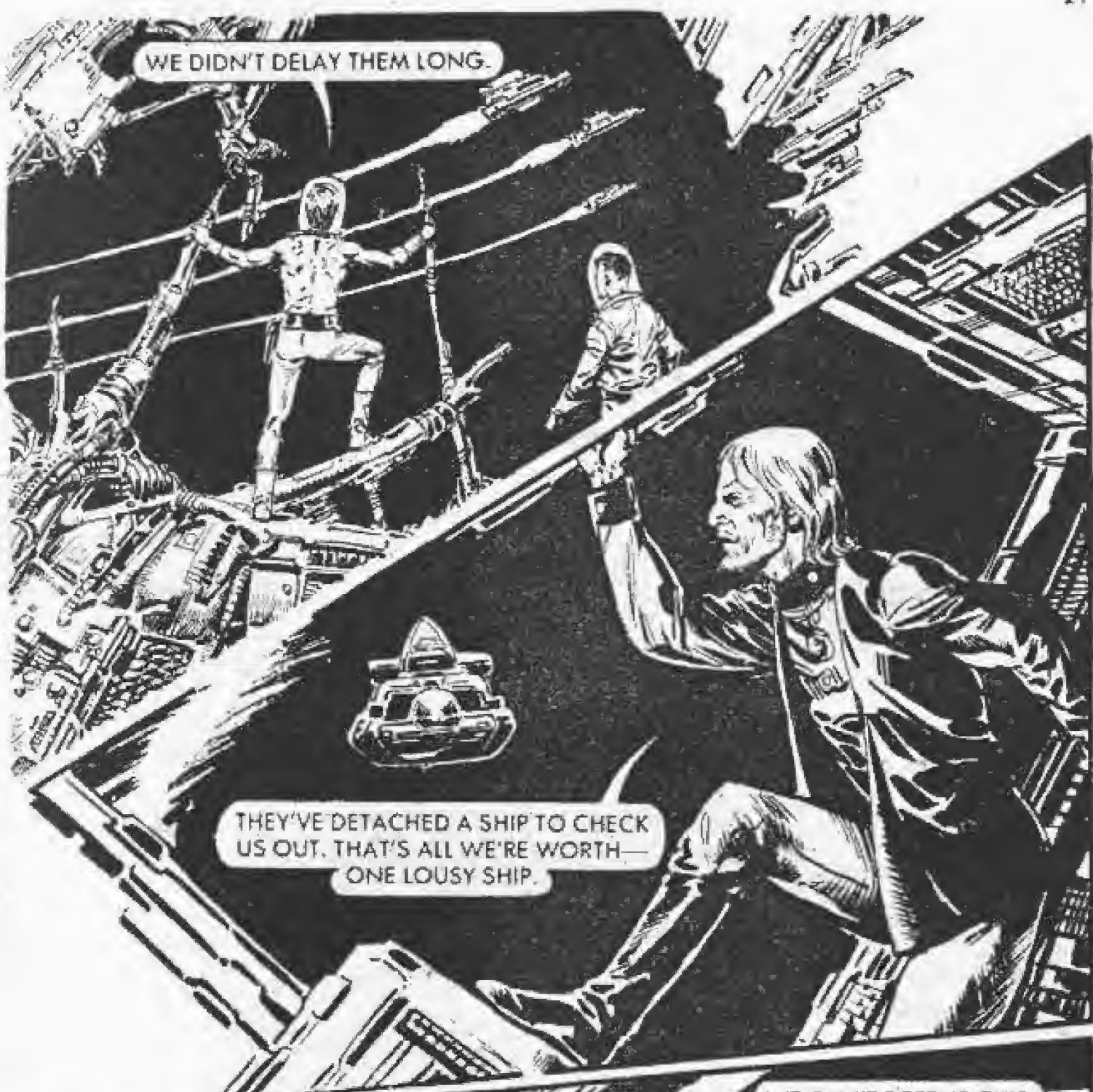
THE BEAM HAD A DEVASTATING EFFECT.

IT WORKS AT SPEED OF LIGHT,
AND FASTER THAN THEY CAN
FIRE.

LOSING THREE SHIPS WON'T STOP THE ASUR.

THE ASUR FLEET TURNED ITS ATTENTION TO THE OBSERVATORY—WITH CATASTROPHIC EFFECT.





WE DIDN'T DELAY THEM LONG.

THEY'VE DETACHED A SHIP TO CHECK US OUT. THAT'S ALL WE'RE WORTH—
ONE LOUSY SHIP.

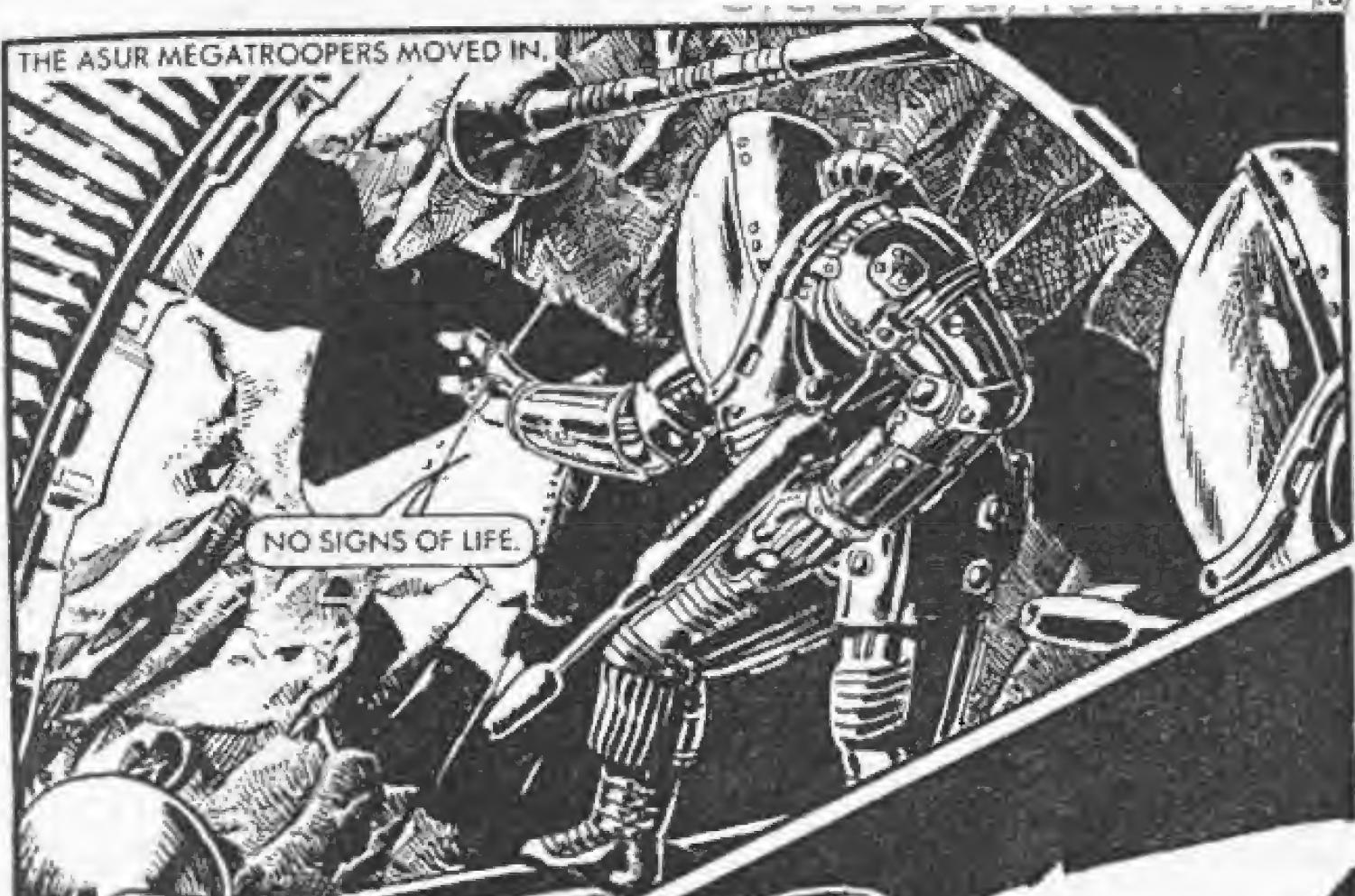
WE CAN'T DEFEND THIS
OBSERVATORY—

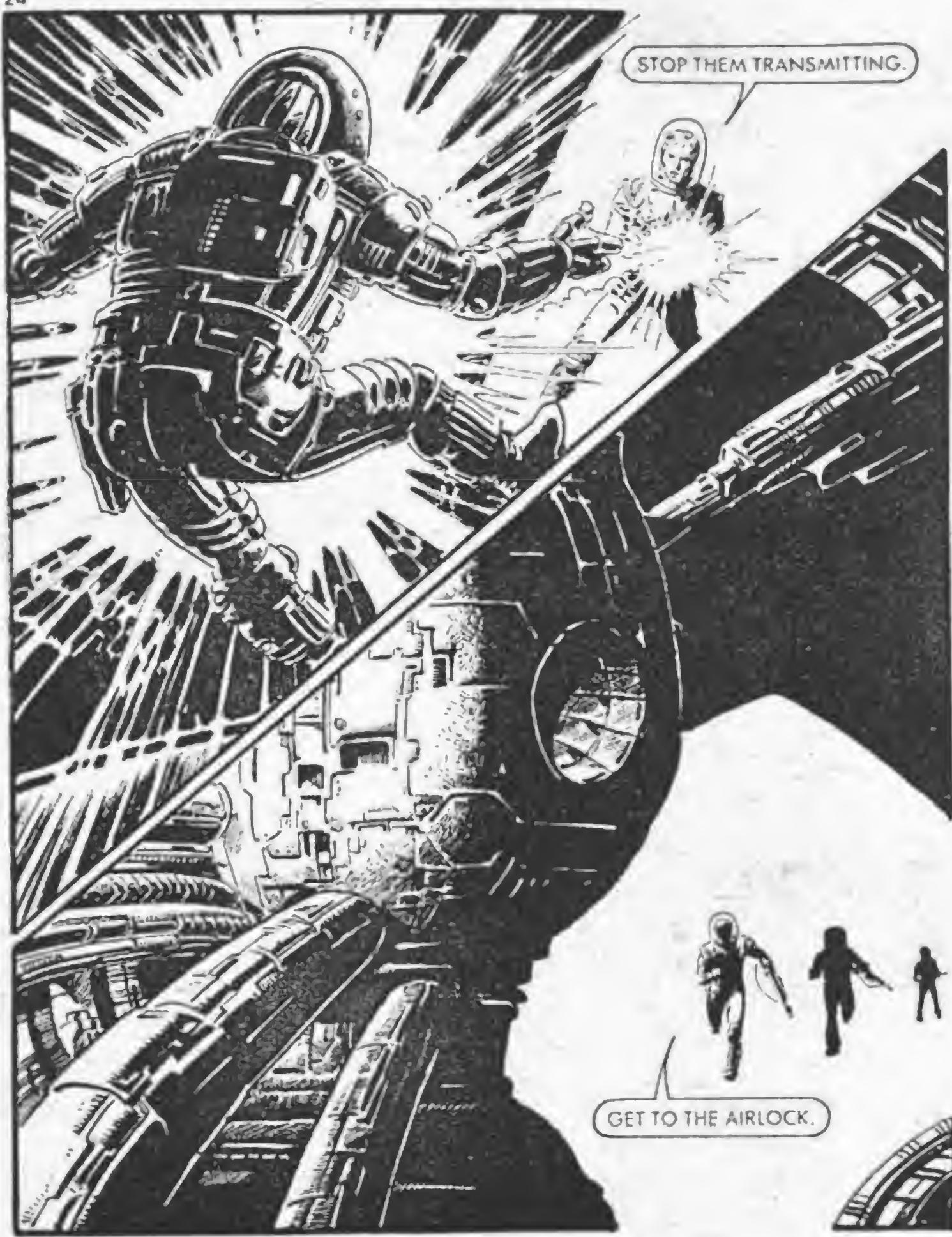
OKAY, SO WE ATTACK!



ON BOARD THE ASUR VESSEL—







THEY SWARMED ABOARD THE ASUR SHIP.

25





WE COULD GET CLOSE IN THIS ASUR SHIP,
AND CAUSE A GREAT DEAL OF DAMAGE.

CLOSE ENOUGH TO USE THE
DESTABILISER—IT CAN BE FIXED.

STEVE SET COURSE FOR ASUR WITH THE RIGEL EXPRESS CLAMPED
IONICALLY TO THE SIDE. THEY SPED PAST THE ETHER-CONSUMING
PARASITES OF DEEP SPACE.

IT TOOK SEVEN PERIODS TO REACH ASUR.

THIS IS WHERE IT GETS TOUGH—SIGNAL
THE SENSOR STATION.

I'VE SENT A " DISABLED SHIP "
MESSAGE, AND CONFIDENTIAL
INFORMATION FOR COMMANDER
ONLY.

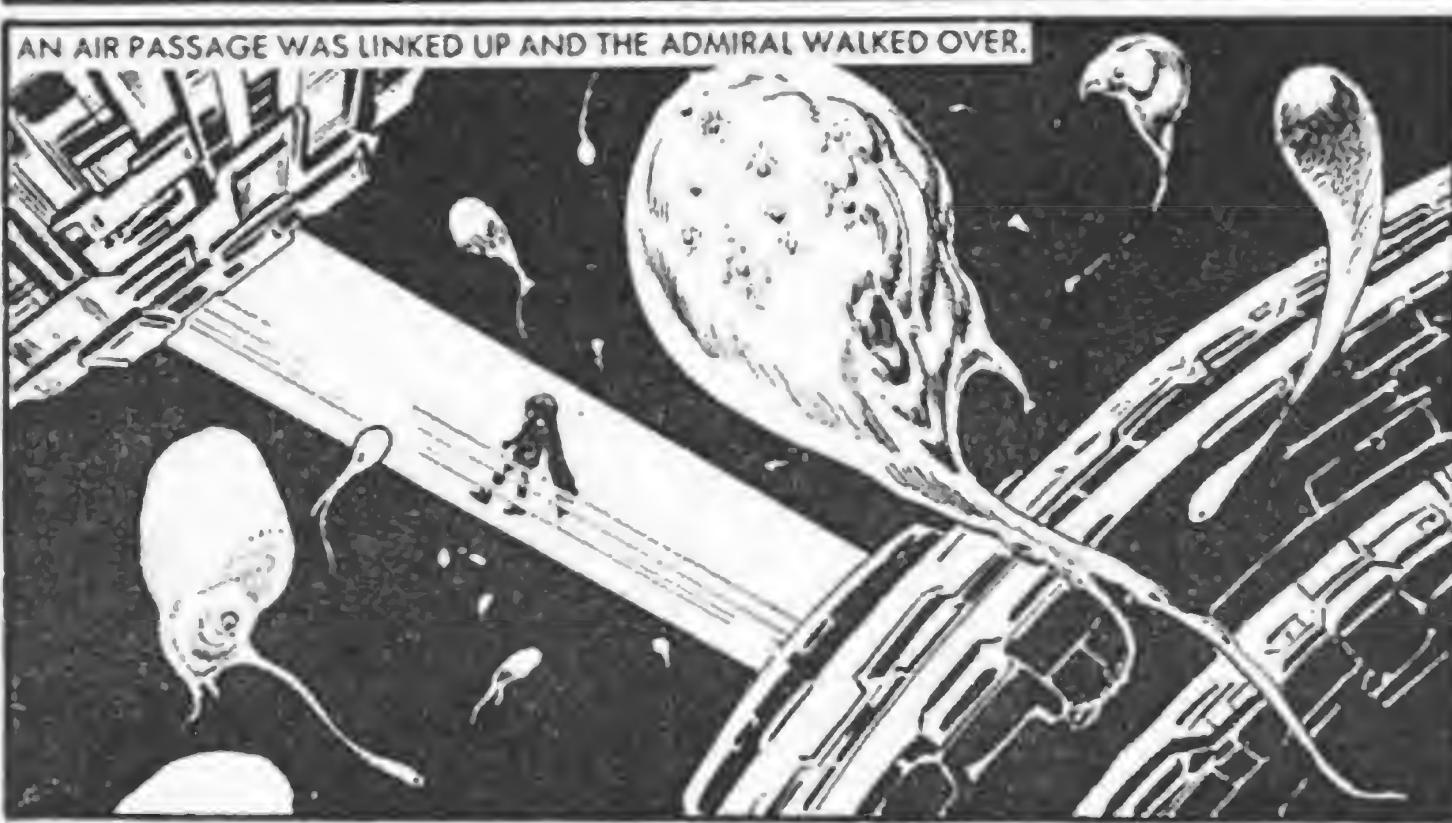
ON BOARD THE RIGEL EXPRESS—



ON THE ASUR CRAFT—



AN AIR PASSAGE WAS LINKED UP AND THE ADMIRAL WALKED OVER.





ON THE PLANET OF ASUR—

BISMALLAH! ALL SHIPS TO SURROUND THE VOLTOR— SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED.

NOW WE GO STRAIGHT FOR IMPERIAL CITY!

IF ONLY WE CAN GET NEAR ENOUGH, THE DESTABILISER IS THE BEST WEAPON.

ASUR GROUND TROOPS RACED TO PROTECT THE CITY.



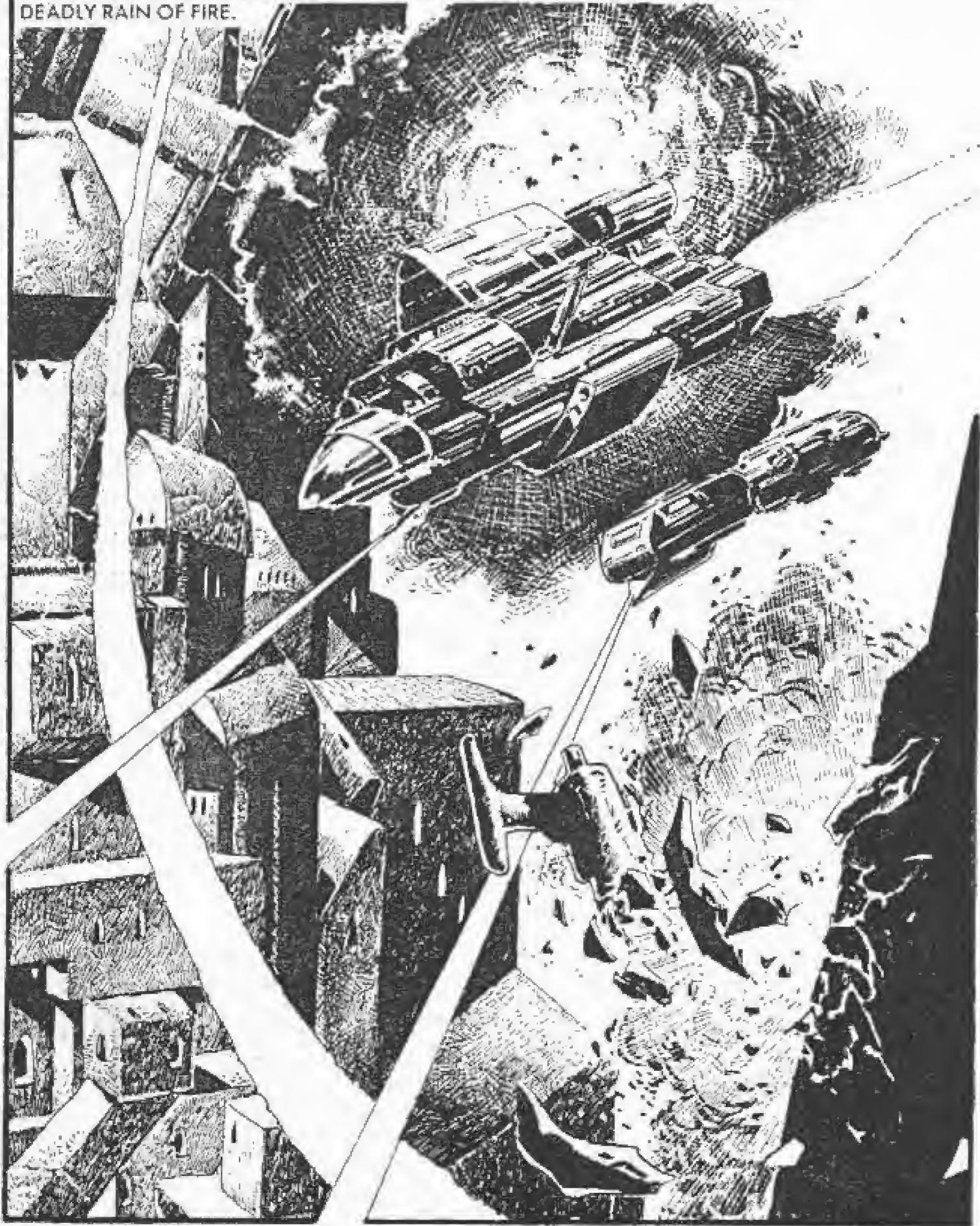


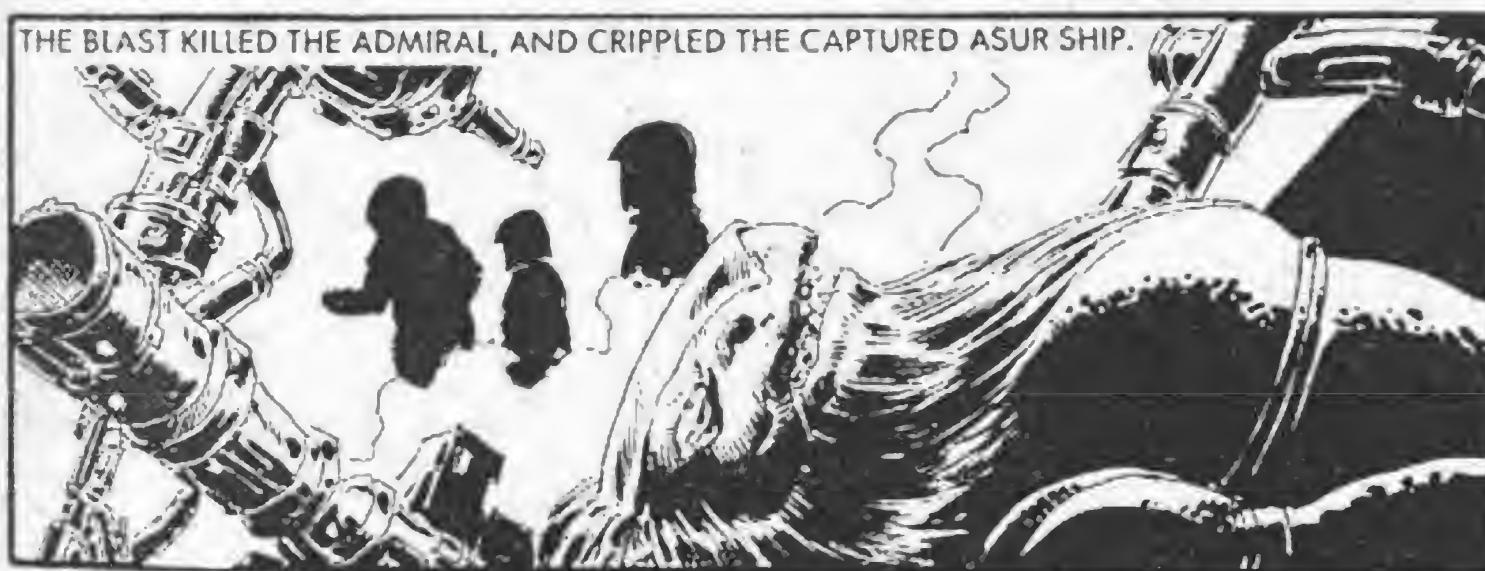
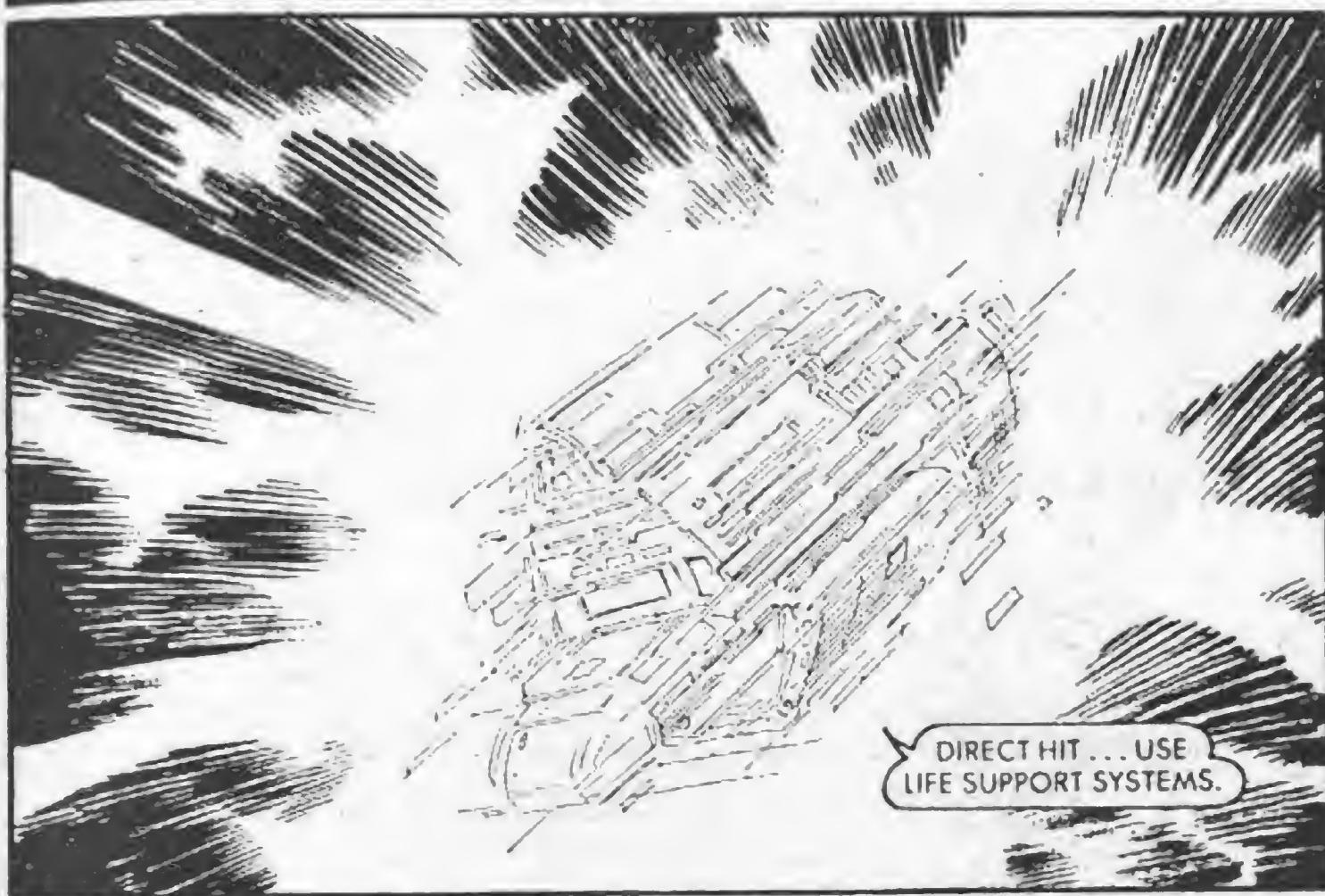
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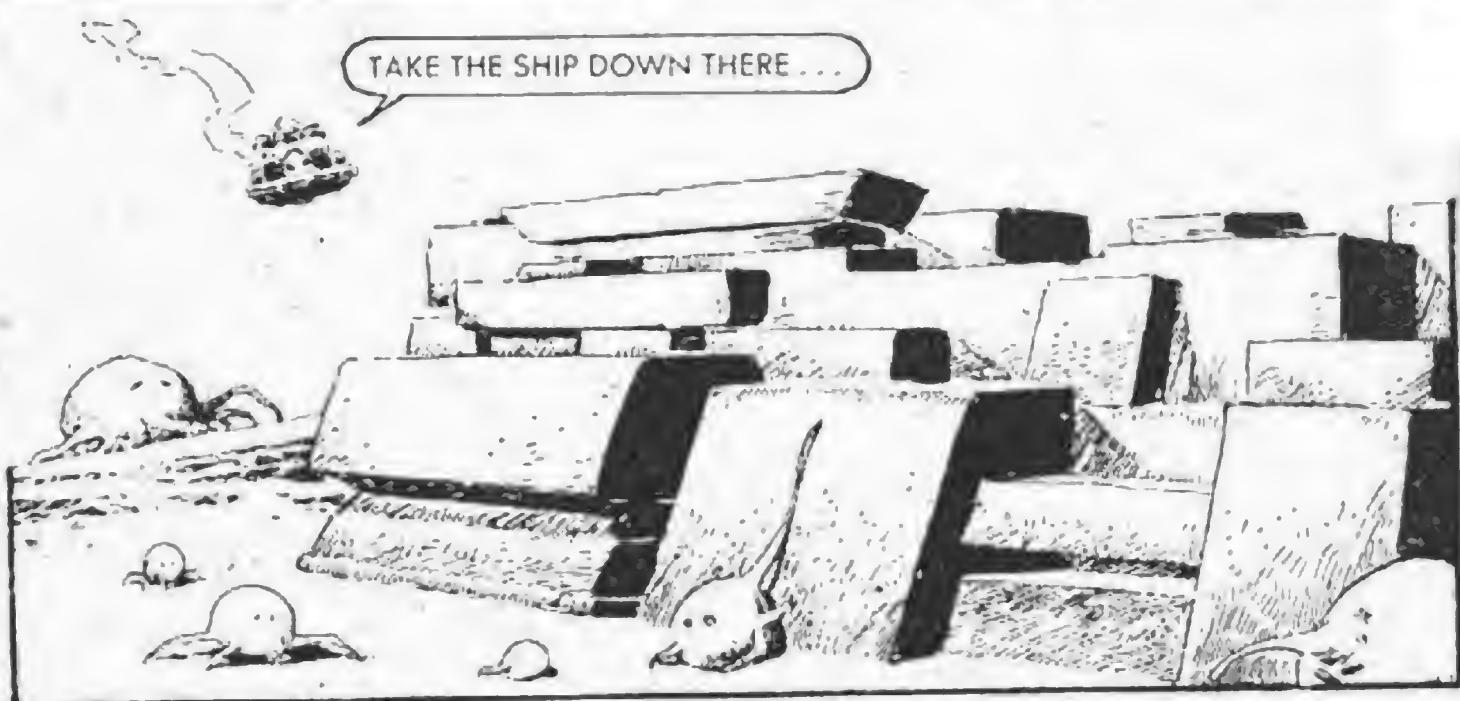
CARVING UP THE CITY LIKE THIS
SHOULD GIVE THEM A PROBLEM.

ASUR CLOSING IN—THEY'VE DECIDED
TO ATTACK DESPITE THEIR ADMIRAL.

THE CAPTURED ASUR VESSEL AND THE RIGEL EXPRESS SWEEP THE CITY WITH A DEADLY RAIN OF FIRE.





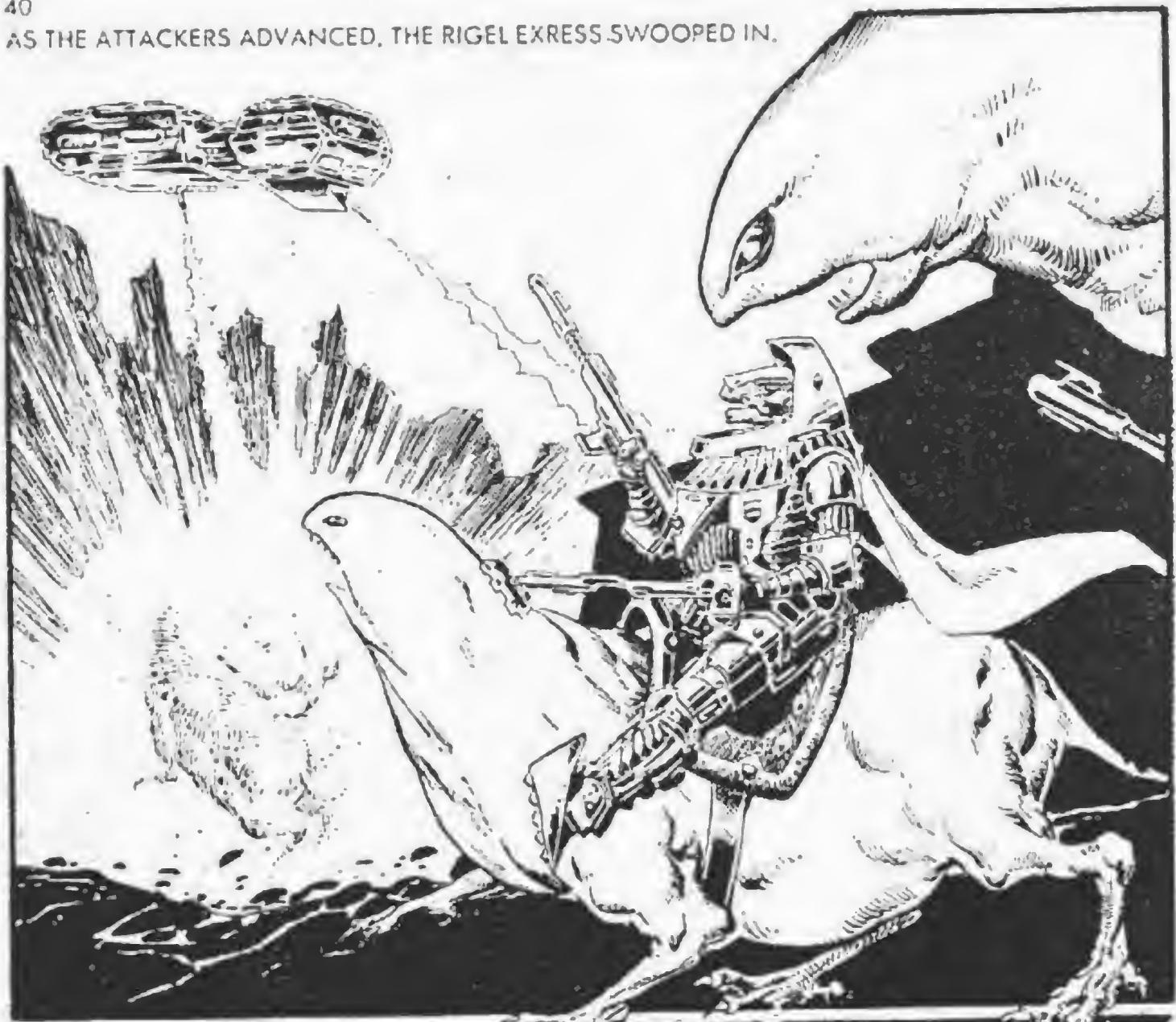








AS THE ATTACKERS ADVANCED, THE RIGEL EXPRESS SWOOPED IN.



HENRY HAS SAVED US — BY DISOBEYING
ORDERS.





THEN ONE OF THE ASUR CRAFT MADE A BOMBING RUN.



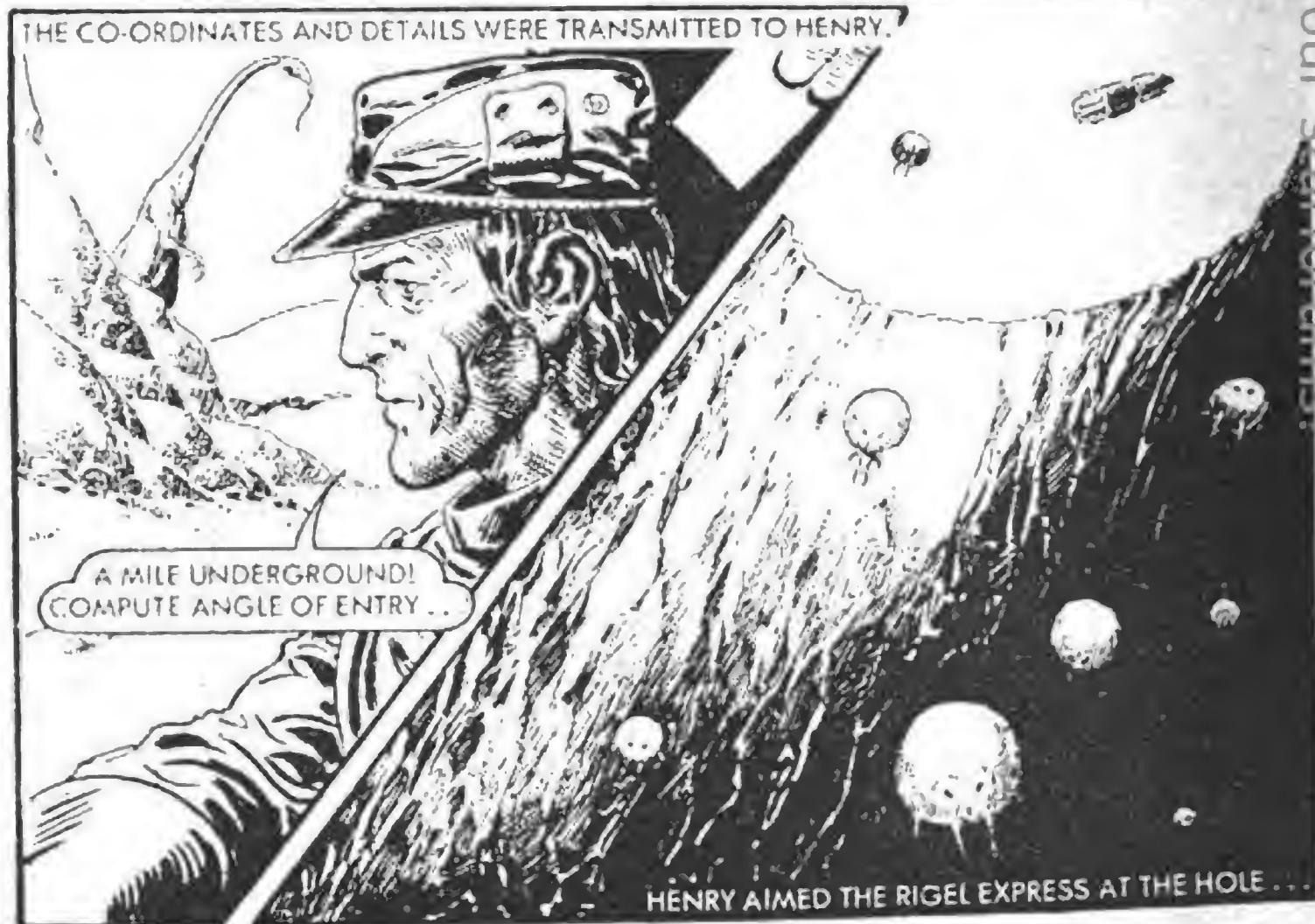
I DON'T LIKE THIS. MY GUESS IS
BACTERIA THAT'LL KILL US
INSTANTLY.

CLOSE OUR SPACE HELMETS AND HOPE
FOR THE BEST -- GET INTO VOLTOR AND
USE ITS LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM.

THE ONLY UNPROTECTED PEOPLE WERE THE ARSENAL STAFF.



Join our stand





WITH THE LAST TRACES OF ENERGY TRANSFERRED TO THE DESTABILISER BEAM, THE RIGEL EXPRESS BROKE THROUGH INTO THE CONTROL CENTRE.



THE EXPRESS BLEW UP, PULVERISING THE ASUR CENTRE.



HENRY AND HIS SQUAD HAVING LANDED WERE FIGHTING A DESPERATE BATTLE.

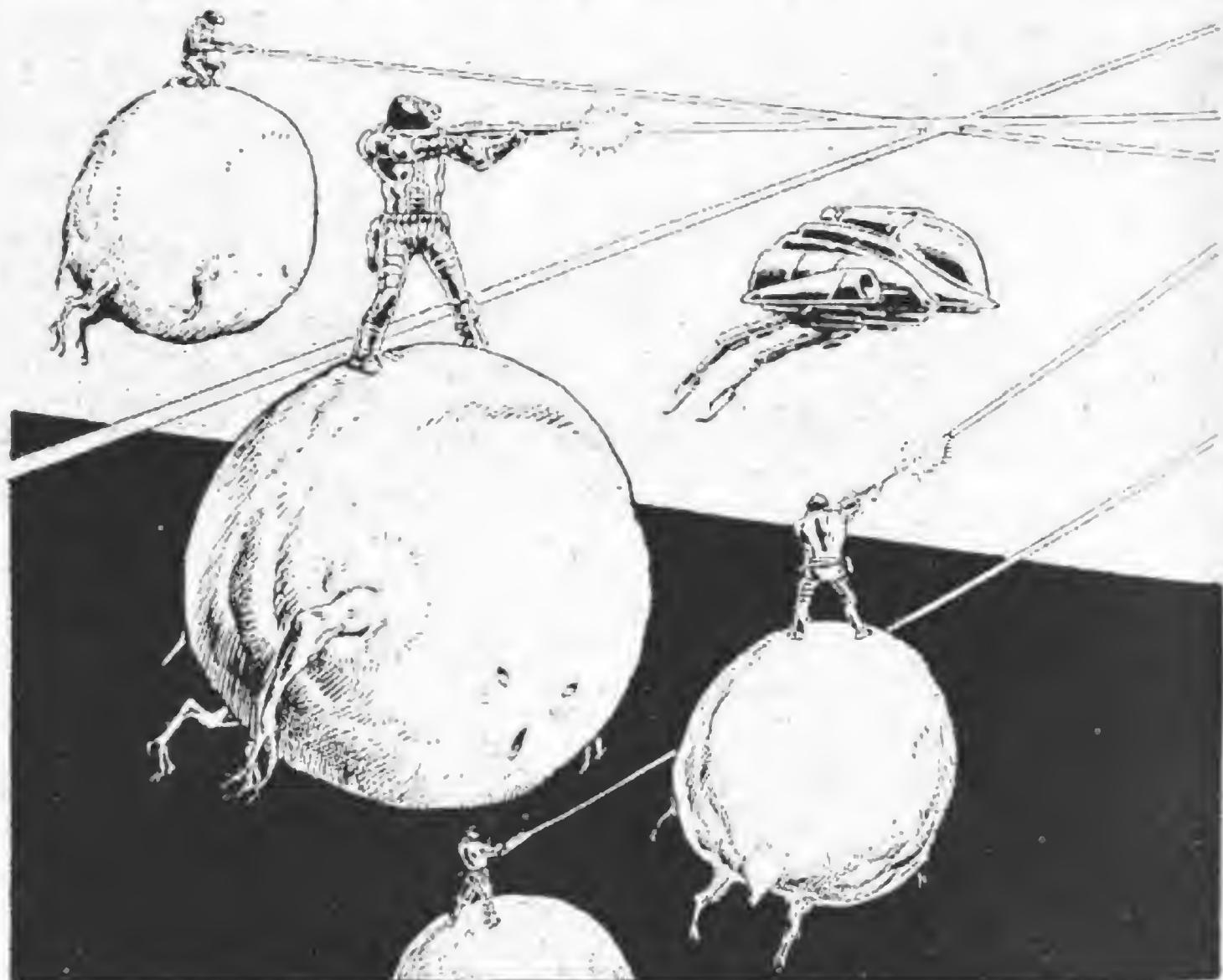




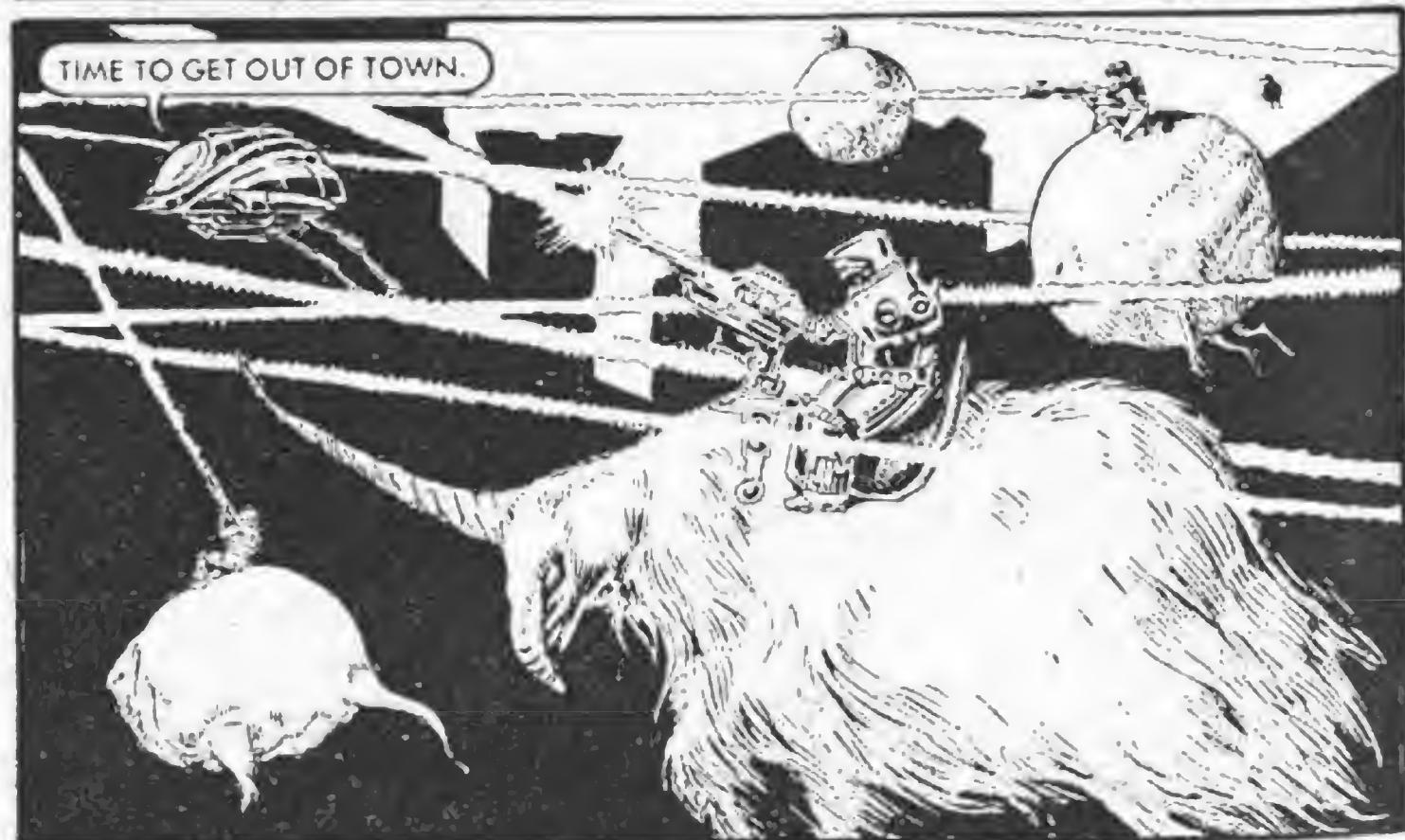
WITH THAT DONE—

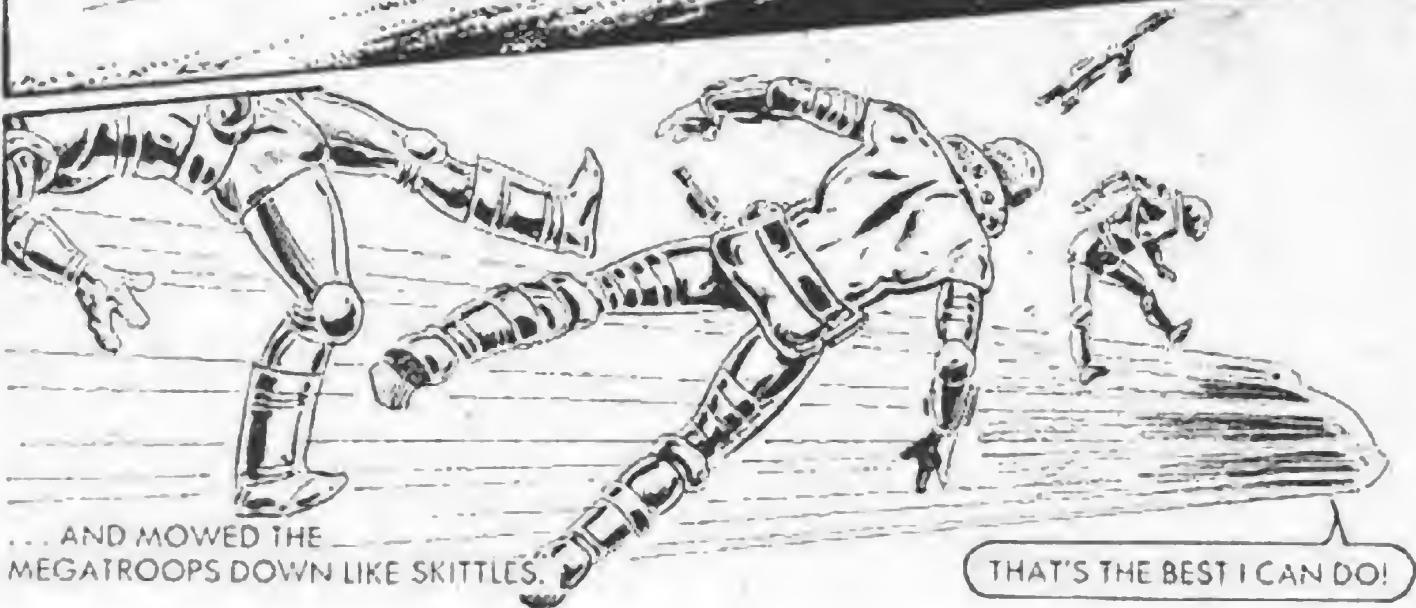


STEVE BLASTED AWAY IN VOLTOR'S SPACEHOPPER—

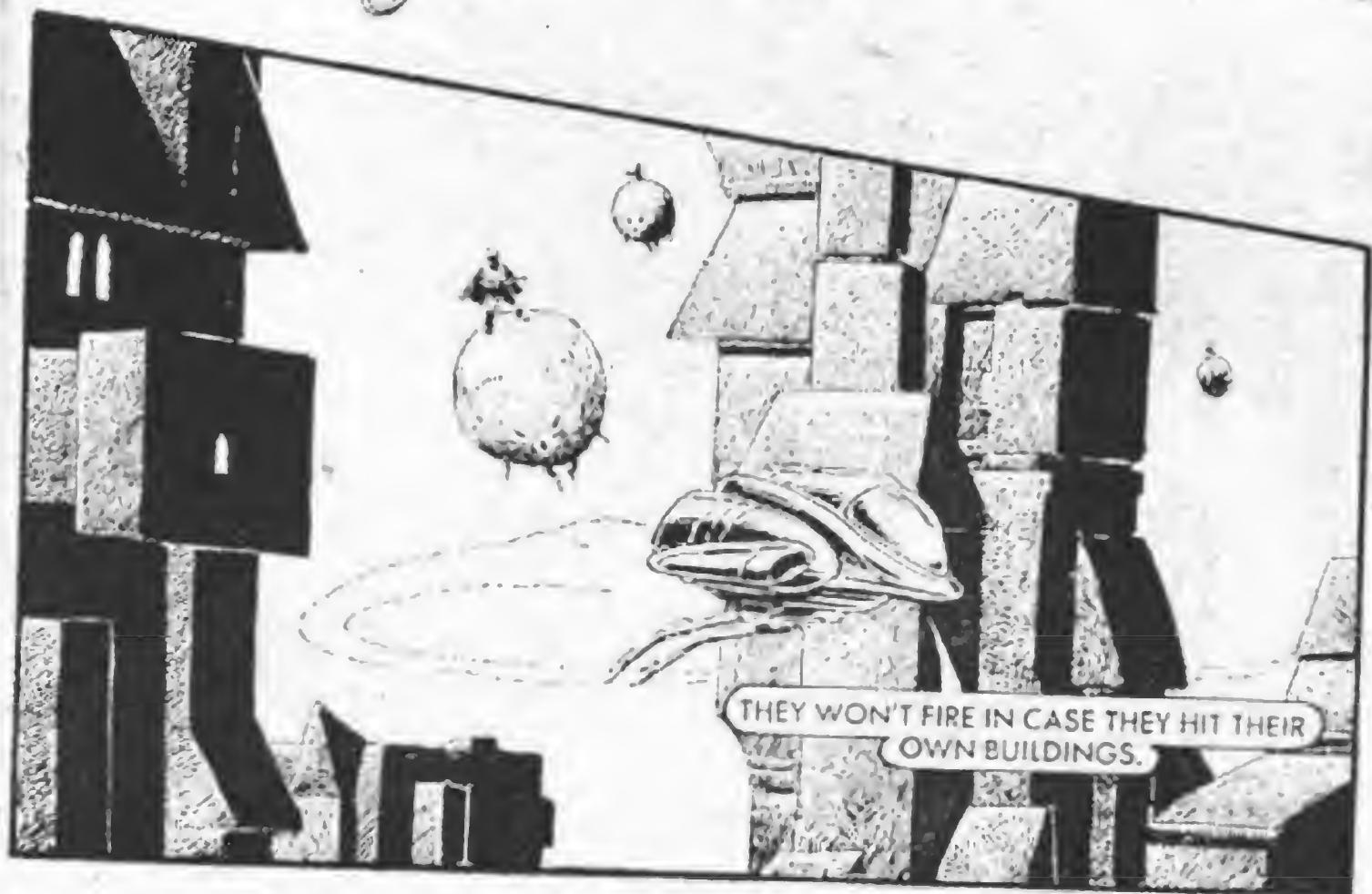
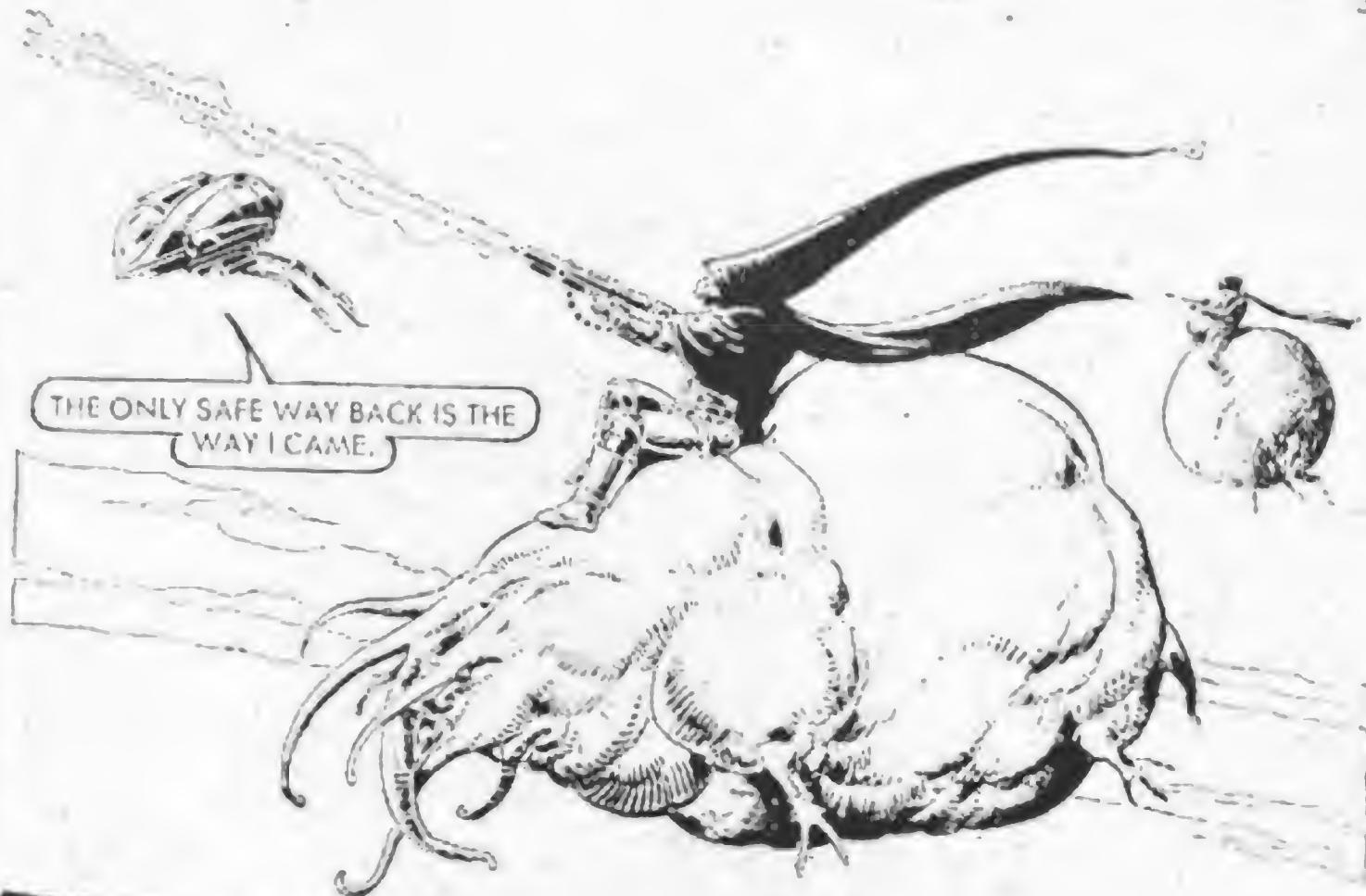




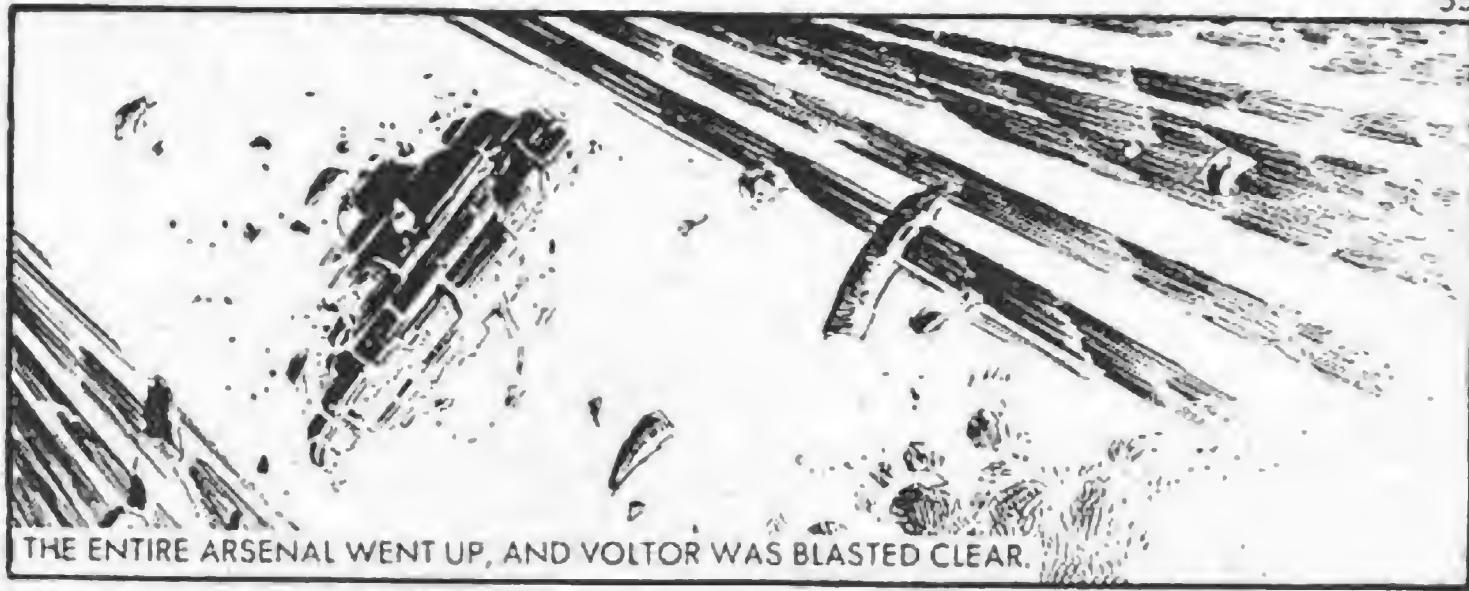














THOSE INTERCEPTORS ARE "BLIND"
FOR A FEW SECONDS AFTER THEY
CLIMB AWAY FROM THE
GRAVITATIONAL PULL...



...IF I CAN GET A LASERPOD IN ONE, I CAN
REEL MYSELF IN AND ENTER THROUGH THE EMERGENCY
HATCH.

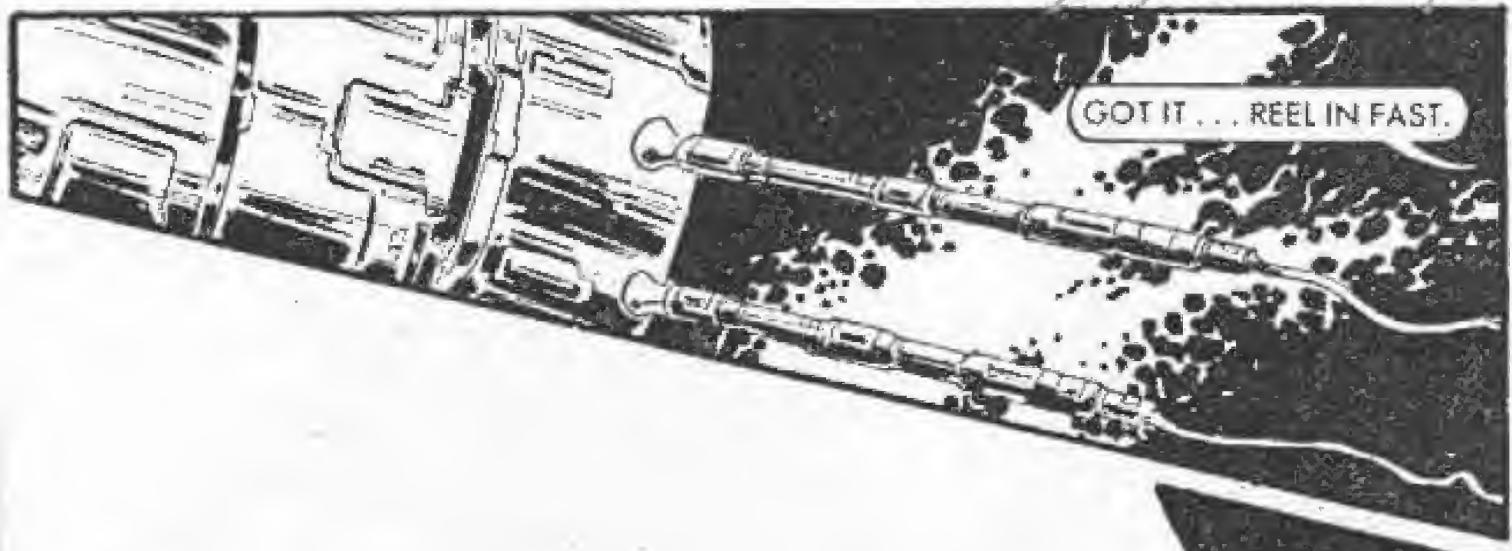
I'M COMING WITH YOU.





FIRE AT THE
SAME TIME.

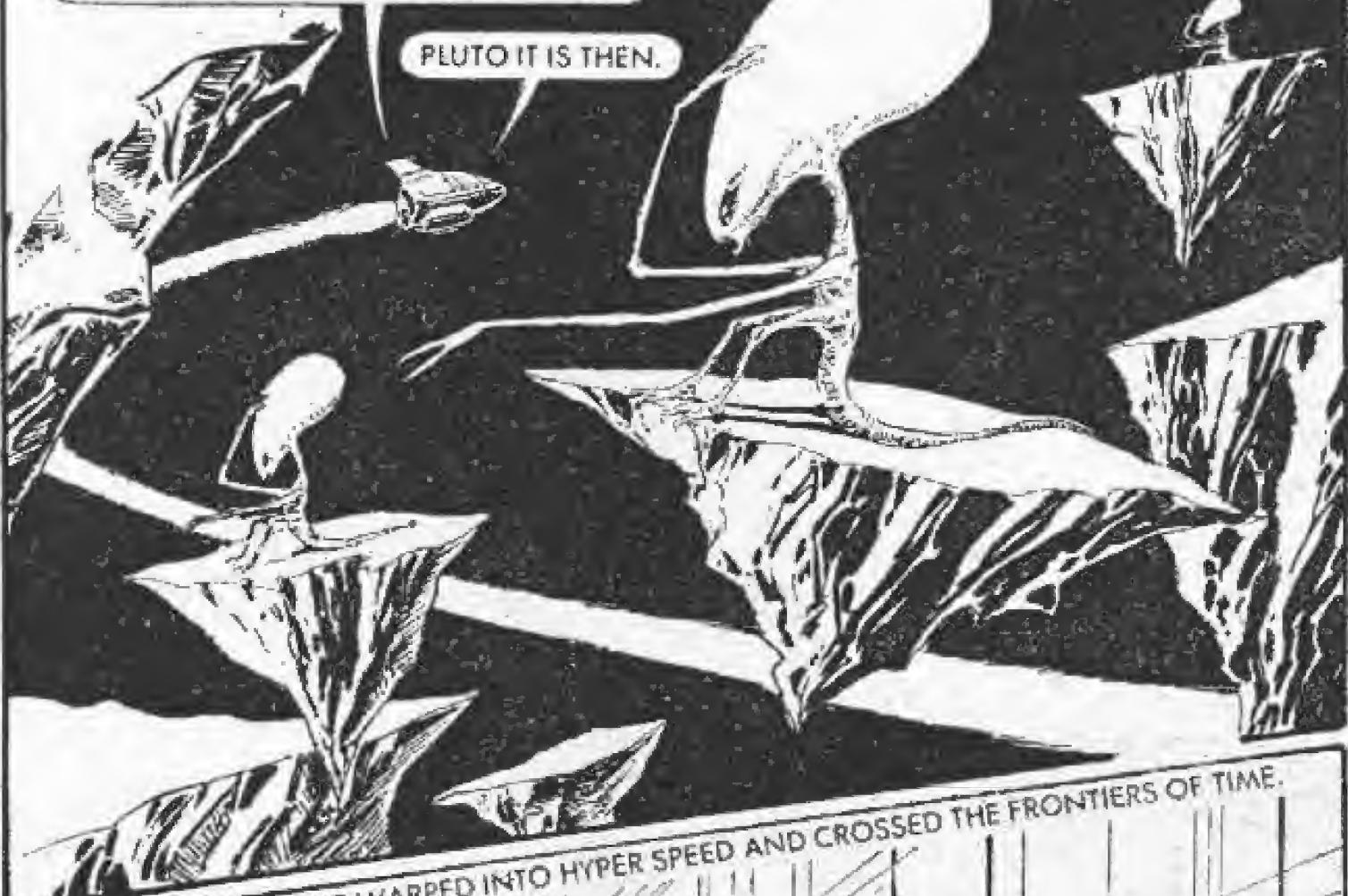
THE LASERPOON HISSED OUT, ITS HEAT-SEEKING
HEAD SEARCHING FOR A SURFACE TO STICK TO





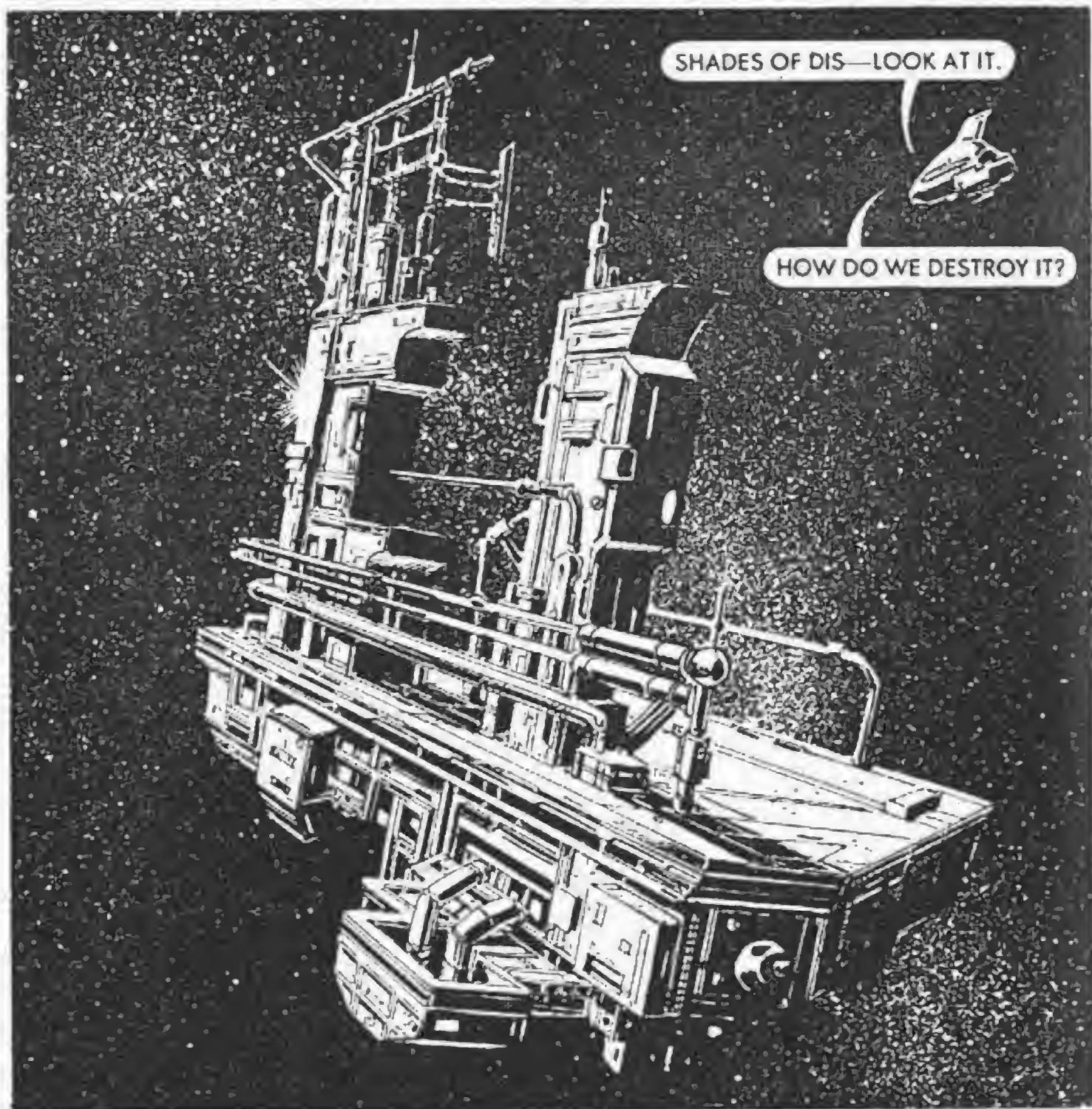
COMPUTER GIVES A 90 PER CENT CHANCE
OF US PICKING UP A DEPOT SHIP IN
SECTOR SOL 9 . . . THE MOONS OF PLUTO.

PLUTO IT IS THEN.



THE ASUR INTERCEPTOR WARPED INTO HYPER SPEED AND CROSSED THE FRONTIERS OF TIME.









THEY EJECTED AT THE LAST POSSIBLE SECOND —



THAT'S THAT . . . NOW FOR HOME.

IT'S A LONG WALK.

THERE'S A FARM COLONY ON NEPTUNE . . . THAT'S ONLY 1,000 MILLION MILES AWAY . . . AT THIS SPEED IT'LL ONLY TAKE US FIVE YEARS TO REACH IT . . . NOBODY IS MONITORING US—WE ARE A SUICIDE SQUAD NOT EXPECTED TO COME BACK.

BUT EVEN AS THE SUICIDE SQUAD SURVIVORS DRIFTED IN SPACE, AN EARTH SURVEY VESSEL LEFT NEPTUNE TO INVESTIGATE A SUDDEN AND INTENSE EXPLOSION IN THE REGION OF PLUTO. ITS SOPHISTICATED MONITORING EQUIPMENT MISSED NOTHING, AND WITHIN HOURS IT WOULD PICK UP SIGNS OF HUMAN LIFE—A DEATH SQUAD WHO WOULD LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY.



**DON'T MISS THIS MONTH'S
OTHER ACTION-PACKED
ADVENTURE**



**ON SALE
AT YOUR
NEWS-
AGENT'S**

NOW!

STARBLAZERS

IN THE CONQUEST OF SPACE 49

In March 1978 almost 17 years after the first spaceflights by a Russian and American, a third nation entered the man-in-space race. A Czechoslovakian pilot called Vladimir Remek, was launched by the Russians in Soyuz 28, shown here on the launch pad.

